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TO RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA PRIORITY 9447
RUEHDS/USMISSION USAU ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY 0165
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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: AU GV KDEM NI PGOV PHUM PREL

SUBJECT: DEMARCHE TO AU AND ECOWAS ON DELAY OF GUINEAN ELECTIONS

REF: CONAKRY 487

Action Request

¶1. This is an action request for both Embassy Abuja and the U.S. Mission to the AU. Please see paragraph 3.

Background: Guinean Elections Delayed

¶2. On August 17, the ruling military junta announced that Guinea's legislative and presidential elections would be delayed. Legislative elections had been scheduled for October 11, the first round of the presidential elections were scheduled for December 13, and the second round for December 27. These dates were recommended to the ruling junta by Les Forces Vives, an umbrella organization of Guinean political parties, labor unions and other civil society groups. The junta accepted this revised election timetable in March. (Note: Prior to the December 23 coup that followed former President Conte's death, national elections had been scheduled for the end of May and much of the preparatory work for those elections had been completed by early 2009. End Note.)

¶3. On August 17, the Ad Hoc Committee on Elections created by junta leader Captain Dadis Camara and composed of 22 civil society leaders, government officials and junta members publicly recommended pushing back national elections again. Before a meeting of the invited press and diplomatic corps, junta leader Captain Dadis Camara accepted a revised timetable with the first round of the presidential elections for January 31, the second round on February 14, and legislative elections on March 26, 2010.

Demarche to AU/ECOWAS

¶3. Embassy Abuja is requested to demarche AU/ECOWAS at the highest appropriate level, drawing on the following points:

-- We are disappointed that Guinea's transition to democracy has again been delayed.

-- For the sake of Guinea's stability, and that of the region, credible, free, fair, and transparent elections must be held as soon as possible.

-- We note that the international community has fulfilled its obligation to fund the elections by committing over \$20 million in support. Any remaining funding gap is the responsibility of the Guinean government.

-- Our press statement of August 20 stressing these same points drew consternation from the junta, but led Les Forces Vives to publicize a similar reaction. We believe now is the time for firm support from the international community for the democracy agenda in Guinea.

-- We ask that AU/ECOWAS press the junta both in private,

during the upcoming International Contact Group for Guinea (ICG-G) meeting in Conakry, and in a public statement. We urge that AU/ECOWAS urge the junta to make the new election dates official, commit firmly to meeting the new electoral timetable, allocate the necessary \$5-\$6 million as soon as possible and permit recognized regional and international organizations to monitor the elections.

14. Slug responses for AF/W.
CLINTON